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# NOTES ON CLARK'S "THE BEGINNINGS OF TEXAS"

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## NOTES ON CLARK'S "THE BEGINNINGS OF TEXAS."

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*The Beginnings of Texas, 1684-1718*, by Robert Carlton Clark (Bulletin of the University of Texas, No. 98, Austin, 1908, pp. 94, with map), is a thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Wisconsin. The greater part of it was prepared while the author was a graduate student in the University of Texas, and was printed as two separate articles in this journal several years ago.<sup>1</sup> To these articles there are now added a chapter on "The Founding of San Antonio." The bringing together of the separate papers and the addition of the chapter designated gives us by far the fullest account of Texas history for the period covered (1684-1718) that has yet been written, and one that, measured even by absolute standards, is highly meritorious. It deals with a field in which the paths had scarcely been broken before Dr. Clark wrote, and it was written in the light of most of the sources, Spanish and French, available at the time, which was a vastly greater quantity than had formerly been used. These sources Dr. Clark studied diligently and interpreted with penetration, presenting, as a result, with fullness of detail and careful analysis of motives the events of the period covered. And it may be added that no other single portion of equal length of the Spanish period of Texas history has ever yet been covered with the same thoroughness.

It is not the purpose of these notes, however, to comment on the excellencies of the monograph, which will be apparent to all its qualified readers, but, rather, to take this occasion to indicate some places where advance has been made since Dr. Clark wrote, by reason of the discovery of materials then unknown, and, incidentally, to point out some minor shortcomings of the monograph, due now to one cause and now to another.

To begin with the map which faces the title page, it may be said that while it conveys a general idea of the geography of Spanish Texas for the period covered, which, of course, is all that it aims

<sup>1</sup>Vols. V and VI.



to do, it can not be taken as a safe guide in all matters of detail. It is only fair to Dr. Clark to state that the map was prepared upon request after the article was already in type, and under the unfavorable circumstance of necessary haste. On what authority Dr. Clark (and others) places Fort St. Louis east of the La Vaca River does not appear, but it is to be noted that it is shown as on the west side by the "Carte Nouvelle de la Louisiane, et de la Riviere de Mississippi," etc., made by Joutel and published in the original edition of his *Journal Historique*.<sup>1</sup> Not only was Joutel in a position to know the location of the fort, since he built it, but the map and the text of his journal of the expedition are in agreement as to this point.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, this evidence is borne out by the testimony of contemporary Spanish sources. In 1689 De León discovered the French fort, and in the same year Sigüenza, a Mexican official of the highest scholarship, made a map of the route of the expedition, certainly in the light of De León's diary, and in all probability of his map. The Sigüenza map, now resting in the archives of Seville, shows the French settlement in the same position as that which it occupies on the Joutel map.<sup>3</sup>

Of course it is only the result of a slip that the date of the founding of the missions of San Francisco de los Tejas (first site) and Santísimo Nombre de María appears as 1689 instead of 1690.<sup>4</sup> Again, such evidence as Dr. Clark presents in his text<sup>5</sup> indicates that these two missions were only a league and a half apart, and that the direction from the latter to the former was southwest. Other items of information agree in a general way with this statement, indicating that the mission of Santísimo Nombre de María was on the west side of the Neches River, in the same tribe of Indians as the San Francisco mission, and not

<sup>1</sup>Paris, 1713.

<sup>2</sup>The map is reproduced in Stile's edition of the *Journal of Joutel*, Albany, 1906.

<sup>3</sup>The Sigüenza map is reproduced by Miss Elizabeth West in this magazine, Vol. VIII, facing p. 199. It is entitled "Camino que el año de 1689 hizo el Governador Alonso de Leon desde Cuahuila hasta hallar cerca del Lago de Sn. Bernardo el lugar donde havian poblado los Franceses," and is signed "Sigüenza, 1689," with a rubric. The annotation on the margin of the map, giving distances and directions, is based on De León's diary.

<sup>4</sup>Compare with the text, pp. 23-26.

<sup>5</sup>See p. 3, note 2.



more than three or four leagues from it;<sup>1</sup> and yet the map puts it at a point nearly straight north of the San Francisco mission, some thirty miles distant from it, and on the other side of the Neches River. The map locates the missions of San Francisco de los Neches (San Francisco de los Tejas, second site), Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción, and San Josef de los Nazones all somewhat too far north, relative to the first mission and that of Nacogdoches, and puts the mission of Los Adaes as far from Natchitoches as from the mission of Los Ais, whereas the distance was not more than two-fifths as great, as Dr. Clark's text correctly shows. The best evidence attainable seems to indicate that while the name "Tejas," in its broader sense, included many more tribes than those of eastern Texas, in its narrower usage it was confined to the tribes of the Angelina and upper Neches country, and did not include, as the map indicates, the Cadodachos to the north or the Bidai, Orcoquiza and other tribes of the coast region.<sup>2</sup> This, however, is a point on which further light would be welcome.

Turning to the text of the monograph, we are given the impression that Isleta, near El Paso, was from the beginning a purely Indian settlement, which is the usual view of the matter. It is undoubtedly true that the importance of the place in the making of Texas is no more than that assigned to it by Dr. Clark and others, but a question of fact remains, notwithstanding. It so happens that Father Nicolás López, the founder of an Isleta which was presumably identical with the one in question, tells us in terms that it was at the beginning not an Indian settlement, but one of Spaniards. In a "representation" made to the viceroy in 1685 he says that, on coming from Mexico to Paso del Norte in 1683, he saw that it would be impossible for all of the refugees gathered there to subsist in one settlement without great expense to the government, and that he therefore distributed the population in smaller settlements in the vicinity, founding, in addition to that at Paso del Norte, the "settlement (*poblazon*) of the Pueblo of Socorro, of Piros Indians; that of San Francisco, of Sumas Indians; that of the Pueblo of Sacramento, of Tiguas Indians;

<sup>1</sup>See the references cited in THE QUARTERLY, Vol. X, pp. 263 and 266, notes.

<sup>2</sup>See *ibid.*, pp. 249-252.

that of the Pueblo of San Antonio de Senecí,<sup>1</sup> of Piro and Tompiros Indians; the New Conversion of Santa Gertrudis, of Sumas Indians; the Conversion of la Soledad, of Janos Indians, and the settlement of San Lorenzo, of Spaniards; that of San Pedro de Alcantara; that of the Señor San José; and that of the Old Pueblo of la Ysleta—these [last] four of Spanish citizens (*vecinos*).<sup>2</sup> A *padrón*, or inventory of settlers, made on September 11, 1684, showed in the Real of San Lorenzo, that of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, or El Paso, and the "Pueblo de Corpus Christi de la Ysleta," 109 families, which, from their descriptions, seem to have been all Spaniards.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, before declaring that the present Isleta was from the beginning an Indian settlement it would seem necessary, in the face of this evidence, to show that it is distinct from the Isleta founded by Father López, since its founding is referred to the same time, circumstances, and locality as that mentioned by Father López, and since two places by the same name are not known in that vicinity.

In the summary of the Spanish expeditions into Texas in the seventeenth century prior to the De León *entradas*, that of Fernando del Bosque (1674-1675) deserves a place, not for anything that was accomplished by it, aside from the geographical and tribal information gained, but as one of the events foreshadowing the gradual extension of missionary activities from the settlement of Coahuila and Nuevo Leon across the Rio Grande into Texas.<sup>4</sup>

Coming to the expedition of Domingo de Mendoza, it is interesting to note that since Dr. Clark wrote, Mendoza's diary and the "representations" of Father López relative to the enterprise, all hitherto unknown to modern students, have been found, and that the episode is being rewritten in the light of these documents, which not only correct some errors and make plain much that has been hazy with regard to the expedition of Mendoza, but also throw

<sup>1</sup>My MS. so spells it, evidently an error of the copyist.

<sup>2</sup>*Viage que a Solicitud de los Naturales de la Prov. de Tejas . . . Hizo el Maestro de Campo Juan Domingo de Mendoza, etc., 1683-1686.* MSS. in the Archivo General Público de México.

<sup>3</sup>MS. in the Archivo General y Público. Provincias Internas, Vol. 37.

<sup>4</sup>The diary of del Bosque is printed in the *National Geographical Magazine*, XIV, 341-348. This version appears to be somewhat abridged. I have seen the original in the government archives at Saltillo, Coahuila.

valuable light on the geography of some of the prior expeditions into Texas.<sup>1</sup>

Incidentally, it may be stated that, as will appear below,<sup>2</sup> the royal order said by Dr. Clark (p. 11) to have been issued to Father Alonzo Posadas, hitherto one of the chief authorities used for the Mendoza expedition, was not issued to him, but to the viceroy. Indeed, Father Posadas states this in his memorial, which evidently was not available to Dr. Clark.

Of more interest is the revelation of the fact that the Spanish government was paying special attention to the Bay of Espíritu Santo and was considering plans to occupy it—as a result of interest in the famed but elusive kingdoms of Quivira and Tagago and of Peñalosa's activities—on the very eve of the La Salle scare, but independently of it. The chief of the sources on this point are two royal *cédulas* issued to the viceroy on December 10, 1678, and August 2, 1685.

Before taking up the contents of the *cédulas* it will be well to call to mind the fact that half a century earlier Father Benavides, in his famous *memoria* of 1630, had reported that the rich and much-talked-of kingdoms of the Quiviras and Aixaos, among whom, be it noted, the Flemings and the English were said to be trading for gold dust, lay somewhere about one hundred and fifty leagues east of Santa Fé, and even less than one hundred leagues inland from the Bay of Espíritu Santo, a landmark which, since the expedition of Pineda in 1519, had been prominent on the maps of the Gulf coast. He went on to suggest that by occupying the Bay of Espíritu Santo as the base of a land route from Havana to New Mexico, more than eight hundred leagues could be saved from the usual route by way of Vera Cruz and the City of Mexico, while the Kingdom of Quivira would be within easy reach of the

<sup>1</sup>These documents are in *Viage que á Solicitud*, etc., cited above. They consist, primarily, of (a) the *Derrotero* of Mendoza, (b) four certificates concerning the expedition by Mendoza, June 12, 13, 14 and 23, 1684. (c) letters of Governor Cruzate, of New Mexico, to the Viceroy, 1683-1684, (d) a representation by the religious resident about Paso del Norte, formulated in a meeting at the convent of Seneceñ, September 19, 1684, (e) report of a *junta general* held in Mexico, May 4, 1685, (f) two representations by Father López to the Viceroy, the earlier undated, the later dated March 26, 1686, (g) decrees of the Viceroy and *dictámenes* of the fiscal, 1683-1686.

<sup>2</sup>See p. 154, first paragraph.

coast, being, by implication, on the highway that would be opened up to New Mexico.<sup>1</sup>

Now, in the first of the royal *cédulas* cited, the king informs the viceroy that it has been learned in his Royal Council of the Indies that Peñalosa, the disgruntled ex-governor of New Mexico, is attempting and likely to secure from the French government a patent for the exploration, on the account of that government, of the provinces of Quivira and Tagago, and that in the efforts made at the Spanish court to learn about these provinces, or kingdoms, the report and the suggestions of Father Benavides (which the king reviews) have been called to mind. He thereupon orders the viceroy to give his opinion as to whether it would be well to open up communication to the interior by way of the Bay of Espíritu Santo, according to Father Benavides's suggestion; what advantages would come from Christianizing the kingdoms of Quivira and Tagago; what means would be needed to effect it; whether it could be done better by way of Florida than through the Bay of Espíritu Santo; and whether any danger was to be feared from the proposal of Peñalosa.<sup>2</sup>

But as late as the 2d of August, 1685, the required report had not yet been made, when the king issued another *cédula* in which he quoted the former one *verbatim* and repeated the request for a report on the advisability of converting the kingdoms of Quivira and Tagago and of opening communication by way of the Bay of Espíritu Santo. From this *cédula* we learn, further, that Captain Martin de Echagaray, "pilot major and captain of the sea and war of the ships and frigates of the Presidio of Florida" had reported that since, as he had heard through Indians, the coast from Apalache to the Bay of Espíritu Santo was uninhabited, the French might settle there without the Spaniards' learning of it; that if they should settle there they could readily enter the province of New Spain, by way of a large river that flowed from New Mexico into the bay; that the bay would be a good place for the Spaniards to fortify, as the location was excellent for a settlement, while a port there would furnish a safer route from Havana than that by

<sup>1</sup>See the translation of the memorial by Mrs. E. E. Ayer in the *Land of Sunshine*, Vol. XX, pp. 139-141.

<sup>2</sup>MS. in *Reales Cédulas y Ordenes*, Archivo General y Público de Mexico, Vol. XVI, folios 189-190.

Vera Cruz; and that upon certain conditions he would undertake to explore the whole coast from Tampico to Apalache and to prepare a map of the Bay of Espíritu Santo and the rest of the coast. A *junta de guerra* accepted the proposal, and on the 2d of August the king ordered the governor of Florida to coöperate with Echagaray. At the same time he repeated the request for a report from the viceroy, "in order that from all directions may be had the desired notices with respect to all the foregoing, for the greater security and certainty of the achievement of the discovery of the said Bay of Espíritu Santo and the kingdoms of Quivira and Tagago, and of their settlement and conservation, in order by this means to make the said provinces of Florida secure from the menaces in which they stand from the corsairs and pirates who commonly infest those coasts."<sup>1</sup>

The interesting thing about this document is the fact that the only specific motives given for desiring the report by the viceroy are those set forth in the former *cédula*. Whatever connection there may have been, if any, between the proposal of Echagaray and news of the La Salle expedition does not appear. So far as we learn, Echagaray was not ordered to look for any party of Frenchmen, but to map out the coast, and, particularly, the Bay of Espíritu Santo, while the viceroy was, as before, ordered to report upon the advisability of occupying that bay and converting the Quiviras and Tagagos. No mention is made of the La Salle expedition, of which the authorities in Mexico had known for some time. Indeed, the repetition of the *cédula* of 1678 would seem to indicate that it was the activities of Peñalosa and not a later expedition that the king still had especially in mind as the cause for anxiety. How this may be, other documents not yet discovered may make clear. At any rate, in the light of these *cédulas*, the Spanish activities in Texas following the La Salle expedition appear as a less sudden development than they have hitherto seemed. In their light, moreover, some statements about the preliminary search by land for the Bay of Espíritu Santo, which has been interpreted to mean specifically or even solely a search for the La Salle party, take on a new meaning.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Reales Cédulas*. Vol. XX, folios 272-276.

<sup>2</sup>See letter of Massanet, in THE QUARTERLY, II, and Dr. Clark's paper, p. 15.



It may be noted now that it was the 1685 *cédula* that set Father Posadas at writing his memorial, as he tells us himself,<sup>1</sup> and which encouraged Father López to ask for fifty-one missionaries to work among the tribes of the Rio Grande region and central Texas.<sup>2</sup>

For the story of the search by land for the La Salle party, Dr. Clark missed one interesting original source that was already printed, though rare, when he wrote. His chief authority was the Massanet letter to Sigüenza,<sup>3</sup> from which we get the impression that Massanet was the prime mover in the De León expedition of 1688 across the Rio Grande to secure the Frenchman, "Juan Enrique." But from the *autos*, or sworn statements of all the official acts attending the expedition, which include the diary of the journey, we get an entirely different idea as to the source of De León's information that the Frenchman was across the Rio Grande, no mention being made in them of Massanet. While the two accounts may not be incompatible, they convey very different impressions. Besides, the *autos* give much additional information about the doings of Juan Enrique among the Indians where he was found.<sup>4</sup>

Our notion of the personality of Father Massanet has hitherto been gathered chiefly from his own writings and those of Terán, who was unfriendly to Massanet. A document has recently come to light in the Mexican archives that tells us something additional of his career before he became connected with the Texas enterprises. This, too, is written by someone evidently not an admirer of Massanet, and pictures him as a vain and headstrong character, who had been sent to the northern frontier under discipline.<sup>5</sup>

Regarding La Salle's career in Texas it may be of interest to note—though the point did not fall within the scope of Dr. Clark's

<sup>1</sup>See his *Ynforme* in the Archivo General de México, Historia, Vol. III.

<sup>2</sup>See his *Representación* dated March 26, 1686, in the *Viage que a Solitud*, etc., cited above, p. 150.

<sup>3</sup>See reference given above.

<sup>4</sup>These *autos* are printed in Portillo's *Apuntes para la Historia Antigua de Coahuila y Texas*, Saltillo, 1888, pp. 224-237. The original manuscripts are still in existence in the archives of the State of Coahuila.

<sup>5</sup>The manuscript referred to is a report of February 10, 1762, to the Commissary General, Fr. Manuel de Najera, by the religious of the convent of San Francisco, Guadalajara. It is preserved in the Public Library at Guadalajara, MSS., Vol. 19.

paper—that the fixing by recent study of the location of the Cenís and other villages visited by La Salle's party enables us to correct all previous views as to the place where La Salle died, pushing it westward to a point only a short distance from the Brazos.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Clark states that the letter of Massanet is the only contemporaneous account of the De León expedition of 1690. This is incorrect. De León's diary, lacking the part covering the journey from Monclova to the Rio Grande, the first folio, perhaps, is extant, and is the first document cited by Dr. Clark in note 2, p. 17, for the expedition of 1689, of which he mistook it to be the diary. This rare source gives us many new details of the expedition which founded the first Franciscan mission in Texas, and corrects some of the general statements of the Massanet letter.

A comparison of the monograph with the first version of the expedition of 1690, as it appeared in *THE QUARTERLY*, will show that the revision gives a more exact idea than the first version of the location of the mission of San Francisco, and also exhibits more knowledge as to the identity of "the Governor of the Tejas," who was in reality, as it now appears, the chief of the Nabedache tribe. Likewise, for the revised version of the Terán expedition Dr. Clark availed himself of the considerable accession to the manuscript materials that has been made since he first wrote.<sup>2</sup>

Not a few items of additional information for the relatively blank period between 1693 and 1713 have come to light in the archives of Mexico since Dr. Clark wrote. We now know something more definite about the career of Urrutia among the Indians; we learn of frequent rumors at the Rio Grande settlements of French intrusion among the Hasinai and the Cadodachos, and of investigations as to their foundation; considerable is our information now about the mission activity during this period between the Rio Grande and the San Antonio rivers, a movement logically connected with the founding of San Antonio; the rich diary of an expedition of Fathers Espinosa and Olivares to central Texas in 1709 to meet the Texas Indians, an event that no

<sup>1</sup>See *THE QUARTERLY*, Vol. X, pp. 261-266, which discusses the location of the Nabedache and Nèche villages, unmistakably the Cenís villages described in the *Journal of Joutel*; then read the *Journal* from the point where La Salle's party crossed the River of Canoes, Margry, III, 317-335.

<sup>2</sup>See notes, pp. 34, 37, 38 (note 1).



one has hitherto mentioned, so far as I know, is now at our command; and there is hope that the hazy affair of Hidalgo, whose doings in Texas are thus far altogether too much a matter of speculation and inference, will some day be made clear,<sup>1</sup> for a clue has recently been found to two documents that should straighten the matter out.<sup>2</sup>

For the expedition of 1716 the most considerable additional sources made available since Dr. Clark wrote are the diary of Espinosa and a letter by Father Hidalgo to Father Mesquia, dated at the Neche mission on October 6, 1716, both of which have been found in the original in the Mexican archives. With these are filed several new documents of lesser importance for the story of the founding of San Antonio, which is the subject of Dr. Clark's last chapter.

For the whole period covered by the monograph an important advance has been made by the finding of the originals of many of the documents that have been known hitherto only in the form of copies, the latter being contained chiefly in the *Memorias de Nueva España*. A comparison of these copies with the originals has revealed the fact that the *Memorias* are in general rather untrustworthy, some of the transcripts which are therein represented as faithful copies of the originals proving to be only paraphrases, or at best very careless copies. One result of their use, for example, has been confusion with regard to the tribes where the missions were founded in 1716. On the basis of the *Memorias* copies of the documents, the Neche tribe became the "Nacoches," the Ainaí became the "Asinaí," and the Nasones became the "Noaches," tribes that can not be accounted for in the Hasinai Indian organ-

<sup>1</sup>That he was among the Hasinai at all between 1693 and 1716 seems doubtful.

<sup>2</sup>See *Autos sre diferentes providencias aplicadas por su exa pa la Conversion de Infieles en la Prova. de Coaguila*, MS., in the Archivo General y Público, Mexico, Historia, Vol. 28, originals; Espinosa, *Relación compendiosa del estado y progresos de las misiones del Rio Grande del Norte*, December 11, 1708, MS., in the Archivo of the Colegio de la Santa Cruz de Querétaro, Mexico; *Decreto del Exmo Señor Duque de Alburquerque, su fha 29 de Octubre de 1703 en que se habla de Franceses en Texas y Cadodachos*, MS., in the Archivo General y Público, Historia, 394; Diary of Diego Ramón, of an expedition into Texas, 1707, MS., *loc. cit.* Provincias Internas, Vol. 28; Diary of Father Olivares, of an expedition into Texas, 1709, MS., in the archive of the Col. de Santa Cruz.

ization, but which, upon reference to the original documents, disappear and cease to trouble the puzzled student.<sup>1</sup>

It is thus seen from this cursory review that in spite of the thoroughness of Dr. Clark's most excellent monograph, subsequent addition to the manuscript literature of the period which he covers has brought to light a number of interesting minor facts regarding the beginnings of Texas and has to a greater or less extent changed the meaning of a number of others.

<sup>1</sup>In Vol. 181 of the Provincias Internas section of the Archivo General y Público, Mexico, are contained the originals of twenty-three manuscripts that are copied in the *Memorias*, Vol. 27, besides twenty-one that are omitted from the *Memorias*. The originals of many of the documents of the thirty-two volumes of the *Memorias* are scattered through various sections of the archive.









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